

IS SUBSIDY CONTROL OF MEDICAL EDUCATION A MENACE?

Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics recently published the address of Dr. John B. Deaver, delivered before the College of Surgeons. He said: "We who are doing the world's work must see to it that our influence in this respect is not usurped by those who sit at their desks and think out specious arguments, fortified by vast financial power placed at their disposal by well-meaning men who are not themselves qualified to judge in this sphere, but must be guided by advisers who are not always infallible. I am thinking of the recent furor in favor of the full-time teacher in clinical branches. I am musing over the creation of great clinicians overnight by the feat of powerful influence. I am impressed by the rapid metamorphosis of the fledgling, nurtured, shielded, not to say mentally confined within the limits of sympathetic institutions and departments. I am not questioning the motives of the originators of this audacious movement, but I am watching for its results—not too brilliant thus far and promising less. I am concerned for the students, and would be alarmed for the profession were it not for my great confidence in the sober sense of that great body of a democracy such as this, which will eventually work its way towards its own proper method of dealing safely and sanely with conditions. Still I marvel at that new super-intelligence, which in rapid pursuit of its ideal, sets aside the principle of natural selection, the well-proved motive of human endeavor (high reward) and the cardinal virtue for the attainment of practical results—experience. In my heart I am thankful that such men had no voice in the selection of a generalissimo for the allied armies, and I note with curious reflection that the vast resources upon which the idea floats were not obtained and are not conserved by similar fancies.

"During the last five years, as you know, the tendency has been toward the full-time clinical teacher. Its central idea was good, but its application, begun before the war, if I mistake not, was influenced by the German idea of efficiency, which, as you all know, failed utterly to include the human element in its equation. Without wishing to appear reactionary, but with the interest of the profession in mind, I do not hesitate to say that I doubt the wisdom of the present course. It is an extreme, and the pendulum must soon swing in the opposite direction. The professor of clinical branches should not only be allowed, he should be obliged, to be in direct professional contact with the public. The science and art of surgery are one and inseparable. There can be no art that is not based on science, and there is no science without its practical application. Of the chaste union of the two shall spring the fruit of the tree of life for the untold millions, born and unborn, whose lives and whose happiness shall depend upon sane surgical science and safe surgical skill. Science has been kept sane only by constant contact with observed and demonstrable facts, like the giant who renewed his strength by contact with mother earth. Practice is kept sane and free from danger of the rule of thumb only by a constant infusion of science. The problem of today is to avoid conflict between these essential elements of a real union, to provide for their proper function, to inculcate into the minds of the young the true conception of their relations and responsibilities, and to deliver to society the greatest good to the greatest number. The last consideration is the most momentous one, for it means results, and it is by results that we shall justly be judged.

"We must deplore, therefore, anything which detracts from that high standard of service to the community which the community has a right to demand, in view of the extraordinary freedom and power which it has conferred upon us. It is our profound belief that the system of full-time sal-

aried chairs for the clinical branches which has been forced upon a number of our foremost institutions by powerful influences is not only contrary to the spirit of American institutions, and contrary to the proper workings of the human mind, but that it is sure to result in degeneration of that art which is the true flower of science, and in the deterioration of the instruction to the student in how to deal effectively with the problems which he must confront in his chosen life work. To me the plan smells of the midnight oil of the theorist (to say nothing of the oil which has lubricated the ways for its launching). It has in it none of the red blood of the real administrator working to get results with humanity as God made humanity. In its application as I have witnessed it the plan shows no appreciation of the fact that the head of a clinical chair must be a clinician. Is not the clinical art also a science? Does it not rest upon knowledge and does it not depend upon aptitude, ability, experience and hard work? Can anyone become a clinician by merely calling himself by that name? Does appointment to a professional chair make him a teacher? Or is it no longer true that in addition to knowledge, which is not so common a possession, the successful department head must have qualities of personal integrity, stimulating personality, and administrative ability?

"In attempting to remedy the evil of the clinical professor overloaded with private practice and neglecting his teaching, his department, and his scientific work, these men of admirable intentions have gone to an equally unjust extreme. Orderly evolution was going on, even rapidly, if one considers world movements; but it apparently was not rapid enough for those who seek to reach the heights in a bound. But this is the day when the professor may try his theories on the whole human race, and the Pied Piper of Hamelin has his counterpart in Russia and would-be imitators everywhere.

"If I mistake not, there are signs of returning sanity. The domination of those who have shown their inadequate grasp of the whole problem is being loosened. Let us hope that the education of our youth will be entrusted to men who are outstanding figures in the field which they are presenting to the impressionable mind. Let us all fully realize that science is the beginning of practice, and that practice is the goal of science."

THE GORGAS MEMORIAL FUND

At the St. Louis annual session the Board of Trustees reported to the House of Delegates that in response to a request received from the directors of the Gorgas Memorial Institute of Tropical and Preventive Medicine for the co-operation of the American Medical Association, the Board had taken action which resulted in the appointment of a committee, representing the American Medical Association, to act on the project. The following were appointed: Charles W. Richardson, Washington, D. C.; Fred B. Lund, Boston, and George E. de Schweinitz, Philadelphia.

The House of Delegates unqualifiedly endorsed the Gorgas Memorial as a tribute to a past president of the Association and one of its most distinguished and loved members. At its recent meeting the executive committee of the Board of Trustees received the following statement from the committee and directed its publication:

Statement and Appeal for Co-operation

As a result of the stimulating suggestion of President Porras of Panama, it has been resolved that a fitting memorial shall mark the humanitarian service of the late Major General William C. Gorgas, and the beneficent influence of his life and work on mankind throughout the world. Following the thought of President Porras, it has further been decided that this memorial shall take the

form of a scientific institute for the study of tropical diseases and of preventive medicine.

No better place could have been selected than Panama City, the gateway between the Atlantic and the Pacific, where General Gorgas' well-planned and executed work made possible the building of the Panama Canal.

It is hardly necessary to call the attention of the medical profession to the far-reaching effects of General Gorgas' work on the welfare of the people of the whole world, especially in tropical and semi-tropical climates, and in all places subject to the inroads of infectious disease.

We of the medical profession remember him as our Surgeon-General during the early part of the World War. We remember his prompt recognition of the necessity of bringing into active service large numbers of physicians and surgeons from civilian life. We remember his genial and kindly nature, his high character, and his steadfast effort directed toward the organization and equipment of the Medical Corps of the Army. We remember the patriotic response. We remember him as a great sanitary officer, to whom we wish to pay a lasting tribute.

A central committee has been formed, with Admiral Braisted, retired, ex-president of the American Medical Association, as its president. The American Medical Association has appointed a committee of three to work in accord with the central committee, and through its members this appeal is made to the American medical profession.

The plan is to build at Panama an institute for the study of tropical and infectious diseases, with a hospital, laboratories, departments for research and all other facilities required in an institute of this character, erected and administered according to the most progressive, modern ideals. The Panamanian Government, owing to the far-sighted, philanthropic vision of President Porras, has donated the great Santo Tomas Hospital, and also the ground on which it is proposed immediately to construct the buildings as they have been described. Dr. Strong has been appointed the scientific director.

In conjunction with this work in Panama, there will be established in Tuscaloosa, Ala., the Gorgas School of Sanitation for the purpose of training country health workers, sanitary engineers, and public health nurses, especially educated to deal with the problems peculiar to the Southern States.

An endowment of six and one-half million dollars will be required to enable the institute to carry on the work according to the plans which have been formed.

The Republic of Panama has demonstrated its sympathetic and practical interest in this enterprise with splendid liberality. The physicians of our country, and especially the members of the American Medical Association, surely will not disregard the memory of a former president, and will seize the opportunity to make in this respect a contribution of which they will be proud.

The campaign for funds is to be international. A large response is expected from North, Central and South America, since the nations of these countries have been the chief beneficiaries of the labors of General Gorgas. It is fitting that his co-workers of the American medical profession should be requested to respond generously to this appeal. It is hoped that every member of the American Medical Association will make as liberal a subscription as possible. Any sum will be gratefully received. Checks should be drawn to the order of the "Gorgas Fund" and should be mailed to the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn street, Chicago.

CHARLES W. RICHARDSON, Chairman,
Washington, D. C.,
F. B. LUND, Boston,
G. E. DeSCHWEINITZ, Philadelphia.

THE PUBLIC PRESS AND THE PHYSICIANS

It is interesting and instructive for physicians to note what the public is thinking and saying, particularly as appears in editorial comment by important newspapers. A meeting of the A. M. A. in St. Louis was the occasion for considerable amount of newspaper discussion of physicians and medical affairs from which we quote a few extracts.

The St. Louis Post Dispatch says: "A transition from individual to organized practice already has begun, and that the movement is rapidly spreading. This means that the progressive leaders recognize the profession's obligation to the public in fighting disease, regardless of the effect on private practice. They regard the benefits of medicine as belonging to humanity and not to the doctors. . . . With the profession under such leadership as Dr. de Schweinitz and his supporters, the public will feel no misgiving toward the organization of men who, more than any other group of equal number, hold in their hands the power of human life and death. The public, moreover, should ally itself with this organization to stamp out quackery and drive from the profession elements that would exploit the people rather than assist them to health. It can do this by fighting such measures as that put over by the last Missouri Legislature to grant physicians' licenses to applicants who pass a State examination, regardless of their education and training."

The Globe-Democrat prints the following: "Doctors are our modern father confessors. Men and women go to them who formerly went to the clergy. They have earned and they have received the confidence of all who are in trouble about their bodies, and of many who are in trouble about their souls. No one can speak too gratefully of the way in which the work is done, of the skill, the kindness, the understanding and sympathy, even the toleration of human weakness on the part of the medical profession. Nevertheless, I put this question: Does the medical profession as a whole take its proper part in guiding and influencing public opinion in these matters wherein it alone can speak with authority?"

Under such headings as "The Family Doctor," "Too Many Specialists," "G. P.'s and Specialists," editors over the country plead for the return of the "all 'round family doctor" or defend the development of specialization in medicine, according to their several viewpoints.

The Denver Times wants the old-time general practitioner and family doctor restored to the place which he once occupied in the esteem and affections of the public. "Specialization has run riot in medicine during the last ten years," says the Times, and "it is time for the old family doctor to return, the physician who was not only well grounded in medical knowledge and trained in the school of varied experience, but possessed of common sense and genuine humane sympathy." The editor of the Western paper, a very smooth writer and a hard hitter, insists that "versatility in medicine is much to be desired," and thinks that specialists are inclined to be "single trackers," who know little outside of their especial fields. Admitting that specialists have done much to improve technique and to advance the cause of medicine, the Denver editor decries the growth of specialism and says "the present tendency carried to its logical conclusion, means that every man must employ a corps of specialists to look after the health of his family. It is fast coming to this unless steps are taken to develop the general practitioner anew and to stop the influences which have weakened confidence in his judgment and ability."

The Hartford Times is for the specialist and for the general practitioner, too, with an apparent leaning toward specialization as offering more than can otherwise be had for the public benefit. "The old-time family physician," who let the children play with his watch chain and who gave them enormous